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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Mayor Fulop & Housing Authority Launch Initiative to Close Digital Divide in Jersey City, Bringing Affordable Home Internet to 10,000+ Low-income Households

Jersey City Unites with Nonprofit and Community Leaders, Hiring Local Residents to Raise Awareness of Affordable Connectivity Program

JERSEY CITY, NJ – Today, [Jersey City Housing Authority](#) (JCHA), in partnership with [EveryoneOn](#) and the City of Jersey City, announced a new initiative to close the digital divide in Jersey City. With a nearly \$500,000 grant from the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), the initiative, led by JCHA, will build awareness about the \$14 billion Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a long-term federal benefit that will help lower the cost of broadband service and help low-income families afford home internet service.

The ACP provides eligible households with a \$30 per month discount toward their home internet bill and a one-time \$100 discount toward a connected device through a participating provider. At this time in Jersey City, only 37% of eligible households have applied for the benefit due to a lack of awareness, lack of trust in the program, or inability to enroll due to application barriers.

The JCHA's public outreach project will at least double ACP subscription rates across Jersey City by deploying 12 digital navigators to conduct outreach and offer application support to eligible households at community events throughout the year. Applications to fill the 12 digital navigator positions are now being [accepted online](#), with priority for Jersey City Housing Authority residents.

“In our digital inclusion efforts over the last four years, we have learned that face-to-face and often one-on-one support is vital to removing barriers low-income households face in obtaining affordable, high-speed internet, low-cost devices, or gaining essential digital literacy skills,” said **Allison Strobel, Director of Resident Empowerment and Community Engagement at JCHA**. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity via this FCC grant to hire, train, and activate digital navigators to promote the ACP

and provide direct support to the more than 20,000 Jersey City households who are eligible for the ACP subsidy but have yet to access it.”

A key component of the initiative will be the creation of a unique public-private partnership that will work to close the broadband affordability gap by promoting ACP enrollment to eligible households. A recent report from the national nonprofit EducationSuperHighway highlighted that approximately 28 million of the 123 million households in the U.S. do not have high-speed broadband. Eighteen million of these households, home to 47 million people, are offline because they cannot afford an available internet connection.

The broadband affordability gap is concentrated in Jersey City’s underserved communities and disproportionately impacts people of color, older adults, and low-income households.

“This is the latest step in our collective efforts to close the digital divide, especially throughout our underserved communities. With this latest initiative, we are focusing on making more Jersey City residents aware of the much-needed benefits they may be eligible for and engaging our trusted community partners to support outreach by JCHA’s digital navigators,” **Mayor Fulop** said of the public outreach program.

"JCHA and EveryoneOn have seen through our long-standing partnership the impact connectivity has on the lives of residents," said **Norma Fernandez, CEO of EveryoneOn**. "We're thrilled to partner with them again under the FCC grant to continue ensuring Jersey City residents know about ACP and can reap the benefits of being connected."

A household is eligible for the ACP if one member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP);
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider’s existing low-income program; or
- Participates in one of several Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard), Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

To get started, households can visit GetACP.org, EducationSuperHighway’s pre-enrollment tool, to see if they qualify, what documents they will need at the time of application, and to see a list of “free with ACP” home internet plans.

The JCHA is presently hiring digital navigators and an outreach coordinator for this initiative. To learn more about these roles and to apply, visit www.jerseycityha.org/careers.

About Jersey City Housing Authority

The Jersey City Housing Authority (JCHA) is New Jersey's second largest public housing authority, serving 15,000 residents in Jersey City, the most diverse municipality in the country. JCHA is responsible for the administration of approximately 7,300 housing units, including approximately 2,300 public housing units and over 5,000 Housing Choice Vouchers. Recognizing that resident needs go beyond housing, JCHA established its Department of Resident Empowerment and Community Engagement (RECE) in 2018, which has developed innovative partnerships with dozens of government agencies, nonprofits, and institutes of higher education to offer a broad range of services and programming to residents with a particular focus on youth, workforce development, senior, and digital inclusion initiatives. Learn more at www.jerseycityha.org.

About EveryoneOn

Since 2012, [EveryoneOn](http://www.everyoneon.org) has helped people living in under-resourced communities unlock social and economic opportunity by connecting them to low-cost internet and devices, and providing digital skills trainings. The organization collaborates across sectors with government, community organizations, nonprofits, foundations and corporations to deliver services that give individuals and families the power to use the internet. EveryoneOn has connected over 1,000,000 people to the internet, provided more than 6,000 devices and delivered digital skills trainings to thousands of participants over the past three years. Learn more at www.everyoneon.org and follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter @EveryoneOn](#).

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